Post-Trib Rapture - Independence Baptist Church

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The doctrine of the “rapture” of the church is clearly taught in scripture as its meaning is inferred from the Greek word “harpazo,” translated “caught up” in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. However, among premillenialists (those who rightly believe that the Second Coming of Christ precedes his literal thousand year reign on earth, Rev. 19-20) there are several opposing views concerning the timing of the rapture in relation to the “Great Tribulation” of Matt. 24:21-29, Daniel 12:1, Rev. 6-19 etc.

The following arguments show that contrary to the popular Pre-tribulation rapture position, the Post-Tribulation Rapture (the Church to be on earth through the entire Tribulation period) is the only position clearly taught in scripture, and which easily harmonizes with all passages dealing with the Second Coming of Christ. As is shown below, **all** scriptures dealing with the **timing** of the rapture show it to occur **after** the great tribulation, in particular **Matt. 24:29-31**, **Romans 8:18-23**, **1 Cor. 15:51-52**, **2 Thes. 2:1-8** and **Rev. 20:4-5**. Not only is the pre-trib rapture position in direct conflict with these scriptures, but **there is NO VERSE OR PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE ANYWHERE in the Bible that teaches that the Rapture must precede the tribulation period.** (We challenge you to find one and let us know!). The arguments commonly given to support a Pre-trib rapture are indirect and very weak at best, and involve forced, spiritualized or secretive interpretations of all conflicting passages to conform the text to the Pre-trib position, rather than relying on the plain-sense interpretation of the scriptures. Please prayerfully consider the arguments below.

NOTE: We flatly reject the recently popularized “Post-Trib/Pre-Wrath” rapture position espoused by some, including Steven Anderson, Roland Rasmussen, and others, because (1) the position wrongly holds that the time of great tribulation that Christ spoke of (Mt. 24:21) does not include the outpouring of God’s wrath, but is merely a time of persecution of Christians, and (2) the position still requires two “comings” or returns of Christ, one before God’s wrath is outpoured and another afterward, which is impossible. For more on this subject listen to our two-part sermon *Prewrath Rapture Doctrine Shattered*.

1. The Lord Jesus clearly taught a Post-Tribulation Rapture in Matthew 24:29-31 (& Mark 13:24-27).

*"Immediately **after** the Tribulation of those days …. he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and **they shall gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"(*cf. Mark 13:27).

Jesus said it clearly! The trumpet will sound and the elect will be gathered immediately **after** the Tribulation. Pre-trib proponents try to dismiss this passage by saying it does not refer to the Rapture, which it clearly **DOES** refer to. The following arguments show that the event described in v. 31 IS the rapture of the Church:

a. The event in this passage being the rapture easily harmonizes with the other "rapture" passages:

- Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven – cf. 1 Thes. 4:17, Daniel 7:13
- heralded by sound of a great trumpet – cf. 1 Thes. 4:16, 1 Cor. 15:52, Rev. 11:15-18
- accompanied by the angels – cf. 1 Thes. 4:16 (voice of archangel); 2 Thes 1:4-10
- gathering the elect from heaven and earth – Mark 13:27, 1 Thes. 4:14-17; 2 Thes 2:1 (note use of the word "gathering" in each passage)

b. Jesus is not addressing "the Jews" here as pre-tribbers propose, but is privately addressing His inner circle of closest disciples (Peter, James, John & Andrew) in this discourse (see Mark 13:3), to whom He had already announced the conception of the Church (Matt 16:18, 18:17). If the Church was to escape the tribulation, Jesus would certainly have told these men who would be leading the early Church. Instead, he taught them to expect persecution or martyrdom, and to await their promised deliverance after those days. He would not have taught this here and then later revealed to Paul that the Church would be exempted.

c. The dispensational Pre-trib argument, that Jesus is addressing national Israel in this discourse rather than the Church, that the "elect" in this passage is the elect remnant of Israel on earth during the Tribulation, is false:

(1). As mentioned in (1.b) above, Jesus is speaking here to Peter, Andrew, James and John – the men that would be leading the early church; not to the crowds that thronged Him out of all Israel.

(2). Verse 9 shows that Jesus is addressing Christians, not Israel ("for my name's sake," John 15:18-21).

(3). The four disciples addressed here are representative of Christians that would be on earth throughout the entire church age, both before and during the Tribulation; before the "gospel of the kingdom" is preached in all the world, and after; see v. 14-15, and "you" in v. 9 & 26. [Note: C.I. Scofield's footnote at Rev. 14:6, that the "gospel of the kingdom" referenced by Christ at Mt. 24:14-15 is a different gospel than Paul's gospel is an accursed, abominable heresy (Gal. 1:8-9). The Lord Jesus and the apostles preached the same gospel; that Christ's mission at His first advent was to give His life a ransom for many; and that to be saved one must: (a) come to repentance; (b) believe on Christ (justification by faith alone), and (c) be born again (regenerated with a new nature). For more proofs on this subject please hear our audio series on Scofield's heresies, esp. Part 3, *Dual Kingdom, Dueling Gospels* and *The Everlasting Gospel*.

(4). The "gathering of the elect" in v. 31 cannot refer to the regathering of national Israel (Isaiah 11:11). The antichrist must confirm a 7-year covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:24-27), and therefore Israel must be regathered and already in place before the tribulation (the time of Jacob's trouble, Jer. 30:7) can begin.

(5). Throughout the N.T. the word "*elect*" as used in v. 31 refers not to Israel but to the Church, including both Jews and Gentiles called to salvation: Luke 18:7, Romans 8:33, 9:11-16, & 11:7 (the elect obtained what Israel could not); Col. 3:12; 1 Thes. 1:4; Tit 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2; 5:13; 2 John 1,13. There is nothing in the context of Matt. 24 to indicate that "elect" means something else in that particular passage. The context indicates that the "elect" in Matt. 24 is NOT Israel, but IS the Church. Further, there is only one group of chosen people that God calls His elect, who are all brought into "one new man" in Christ Jesus (for more proof here, listen to *There's ONE Chosen People, NOT TWO* – Heresies of Scofield, Part 2).

2. The Rapture of the saints will be a glorious, unmistakable, creation-changing event. Therefore the rapture cannot precede any part of the Tribulation period, and must occur at the very beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ.

a. Romans 8:18-23 – This passage shows that **the event Paul says all creation is groaning and waiting for is the "redemption of our body"** – which of IS the rapture. Both were cursed at the same time (creation along with mankind; Gen. 3:17-19) and **both will be redeemed at the same time**. Thus **the rapture CANNOT precede the cataclysmic judgments of ANY PART of the tribulation** – seals, trumpets, or vials included. If the rapture preceded the tribulation, Paul would say creation would be awaiting Christ's coming, not the redemption of our body.

b. 1 Thes. 4:14-17 – The *"shout, the voice of the archangel and the trump of*

God" in this passage sounds unmistakably loud and boisterous, not a secret, silent catching away, or hidden in the veiled reference at Rev. 4:1 as taught by proponents of the Pre-trib position.

3. The Apostle Paul clearly taught a Post-trib Rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, ***at the last trump****: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."* Since the Resurrection/Rapture occurs at the "last trump" it cannot take place before the "great sound of a trumpet" mentioned by the Lord Jesus in Matt. 24:31 (occurs after the Tribulation), nor can it precede the Seven Trumpet judgments of Rev. 8-11, and actually occurs at the 7th trumpet itself (Rev. 11:15-18). This "last trump" is the same trumpet mentioned in 1 Thes. 4:16 and Matt. 24:31. [Note: The book of Revelation is NOT given in linear chronology, but includes 3 separate visions of the tribulation period. The the 6th Seal (6:13-14), 7th Trump (11:15-19) & 7th Vial judgment (16:17-21) all describe the same event(s) – see Argument No. 5 below].

4. The Apostle Paul taught a Post-trib Rapture in 2 Thes. 2:1-8.

The plain sense interpretation and obvious point of this passage, meant to dispel false alarm at Thessalonica, is that the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "our gathering together unto Him" in v. 1 (the "Day of Christ" in v. 2 and "that day" in v. 3) will not occur until after a"falling away" (apostasy) and the antichrist is revealed and destroyed in v. 3. (The word "by" in v. 1 (Gr. huper, 5228) means "concerning" or "regarding").

The "falling away" in v. 3 (Gr. apostosia, meaning rebellion; 1 Tim 4:1-2, Matt 24:10 etc.) cannot mean the rapture (departure from earth rather than from the faith) because (1) the clear meaning of the Greek word apostosia is that of rebellion and anarchy, and (2) because the Apostle Paul would then be making the contradictory statement that our gathering together unto him (v. 1) will not happen until after our gathering together unto Him (v.3).

Pre-tribbers claim "he who now letteth" in v. 7 is the Holy Spirit as working through the Church, therefore the Church must be removed from earth before the antichrist can be revealed. This theory is diametrically in error: (1) the Church would never be described as "he"; (2) the Holy Spirit is omnipresent God and will never be "taken out of the way"; and (3) the theory completely ignores Paul's context and main point which runs through the entire passage, that Christ's coming must be preceded by the apostasy and coming of antichrist. This is the point v. 1-3, and again in v. 6-8. The word withholdeth and letteth in v. 6 and 7 is

the same word in the Greek, and it is the same person withholding in both places. The phrase “and then” in v. 8 means “at that time.” It is the coming of antichrist that is withholding the revealing of Christ in His time. The mystery of iniquity in v. 7 is Satan himself (see 1 Jn. 2:18). It is the antichrist that will be taken out of the way, at Christ’s coming (Rev. 19:20). (For more detail on this point, please hear our message, *The Falling Away and the Restrainer*)

5. The Book of Revelation teaches a Post-Tribulation Rapture.

Revelation 20:4-6 describes the Resurrection (the “First Resurrection”) of the Righteous who will reign with Christ on earth for 1000 years. The event is presented in clear chronological order following the Tribulation period and the Battle of Armageddon, after the Antichrist and false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire and Satan is bound for the thousand years. There is no previous resurrection presented in Revelation (although this same event is alluded to in 11:15-19, the 7th Trumpet). This event, in Rev. 20:4, IS the Rapture of the Church.

The event in Rev. 20 is referred to as the “First Resurrection.” If there was another resurrection or rapture before the Tribulation, the event in Rev. 20 would be the Second resurrection, not the First. A simple word study of the word “first” in its context in Rev. 20 shows that the word clearly means first in chronological order, not “best” as some have claimed. It is the “first” resurrection as compared and opposed to the second resurrection and “second death” of the wicked a thousand years later following the Millennial reign of Christ (Rev 20:12-15).

Note: the events described in Revelation 6-19 are **not** given in linear, sequential order. **Read the passages** and take note that the 6th Seal (6:13-14), 7th Trump (11:15-19) & 7th Vial judgment (16:17-21) all describe the same event(s), seen also at Matt. 24:29, which ends the tribulation at Christ’s coming; thus **the 7 Seals, 7 Trumpets, and 7 Vials are three separate visions of the tribulation period**, separated by parenthetic interludes at ch’s. 7 & 11-14. The 7 Seals encompass the entire 70th week of Daniel 9, the first two immediately preceding (1st Seal being the Antichrist’s rise to political power, with the 2nd Seal being a world wide war that precipitates “the covenant” of Dan. 9:27), and the 7th Seal immediately following the period, while the Trumpets and Vials occur only in the latter half of that ‘week’ (Rev. 11:2-3, 12:6-7,14 & 13:5), as illustrated in the below timeline, suggesting the likely relation of the Seal, Trumpet and Vial judgments to each other:

Timeline of the Tribulation – Daniel’s 70th Week

7 Seals 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7 Trumpets (last 3 = 3 woes) **1 2 3 4 5 6 7**

7 Vials **1 2 3 4 5 6 7**

|————-1st Half————-||————-2nd Half————–|

Antichrist's Reign

For more on this point, download the PDF and listen to our message on this page: *Pre-Wrath (& Pre-Trib) Rapture Doctrines Shattered, Part 2*.

Pre-tribbers claim the words in Rev. 4:1, "Come up hither" is a hidden reference to the rapture. This absurd attempt to find a Pre-trib rapture where none is taught is typical of the many secretive and twisted interpretations required to support the Pre-trib position. The Rapture of the Church is to be a glorious, unmistakable, creation-changing event (Rom. 8:18-23), not a secret, silent event (Argument 2.a above). Given the clear and unmistakable presentation in Rev. 20 of the First Resurrection, why would such a momentous, creation-changing event as a Pre-trib rapture or resurrection not be also as clearly presented? The invitation at this verse is given to John alone.

6. The Lord Jesus taught a Post-Tribulation Rapture in his parables.

a. The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares in Matthew 13:24-30,36-43 disproves the Pre-trib rapture theory, showing it is the wicked that will be removed from earth (Rev. 19:14-21) not the righteous; after which the Rapture will occur, the dead in Christ will be raised, and those believers who survive the Tribulation will be transformed to enter the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-4, 1 Cor. 15:51-52, 1 Thes. 4:16-17, Matt. 24:31)

b. The parable of the days of Noah in Matthew 24:37-41 agrees with the Parable of the Wheat and Tares; it is the wicked that were "taken away" in the flood, not the righteous.

7. The Pre-trib argument that the Church is not mentioned in the book of Revelation after chapter 3 and that hence the rapture must have occurred at Rev. 4:1 is blatantly false.

a. An argument from silence is a weak argument. The Bible does not contain the words "rapture" or "trinity" but still clearly teaches these doctrines. The word "church" is also not found in the books of 2 Timothy, Titus, 2 Peter, 1 or 2 John or Jude, but these books are clearly written both to and about the Church.

b. The book of Jude does not mention the Church by name, but uses the word "saints" to refer to the Church in v. 3 & 14, just as the Apostle John does

throughout the book of Revelation (Rev. 5:8, 8:3-4, 11:18, 13:7, 13:10, 14:12, 15:3, 16:6, 17:6, 18:24, and 19:8). Other references to a faithful church remnant in Revelation are the martyrs of 6:9-11, the great multitude of 7:9-17, those who die in the Lord in Rev. 14:13, and the people of God called out of Babylon, Rev. 18:4. The Church is seen all throughout the book of Revelation. To say that these "saints" or believers are saved Israelites who believe during the Tribulation, but who are not as worthy as we are of being spared that awful time, is not justifiable from scripture.

8. The Second Coming of Christ is presented throughout the Bible as a one-time climactic event, not to be divided into two phases of Rapture (resurrection) and then Return. Jesus will return at the end of the Tribulation, first to put down antichrist's rebellion, and then to resurrect His saints.

a. Nowhere in the Bible is there any indication or teaching given that the Second Advent will be in two phases, or that it will be preceded seven years beforehand by such a momentous event as the rapture of the Church. This doctrine (two-stage return) was not taught by any of the Apostles. All references to the Second Coming are of one end-time event. (Matt. 16:27-28; Matt. 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 12:35-40; Luke 21; John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 1:7-8; 1 Cor. 15:23-24, 51-53; Phillip. 3:20-21; 1 Thes. 3:13, 4:15-18 & 5:23; 2 Thes. 1:4-10, 2:8; 1 Tim 6:14, 2 Tim 4:1-8; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet 1:7,13 & 4:12-13; 1 Jn 3:2, Rev. 19:11-21)

b. The three Greek words used in the NT for the Second Coming (parousia, epiphaneia, and apokolupsis) are used interchangeably in relation to all end-time events associated with the Second Coming, with no distinction ever being made between the Rapture and the Return of Christ:

(1). **Epiphaneia** (2015) – usually translated "appearing," used in the following passages:
Titus 2:13 – our blessed hope
2 Thes. 2:8 – (translated "brightness" in KJV) – destruction of antichrist
1 Tim 6:14 (v. 11-19) – conclusion of church ministry and service
2 Tim 4:1 – judgment of the living and the dead
SO: The *epiphaneia* of Christ is our blessed hope, at which time antichrist will be destroyed, our work on earth will be ended, and the living and the dead will be judged (1 Thes. 4:16, 2 Cor. 5:10)

(2). **Apokalupsis** (602) – usually translated "revelation" or "revealed," used in the following passages:
2 Thes. 1:5-10 – Christ coming with his angels to end our suffering (no promise of a

Pre-trib rapture; the comfort given in this passage is the vengeance to be taken on the enemies of God's people)
1 Peter 1:7,13 & 4:13 – Christ coming after the testing of our faith by fire (no Pre-trib promise)
1 Cor. 1:7-8 – Christ coming at "the end," confirming the saints unto the Day of Christ
SO: The *apokalupsis* of Christ occurs at the end, at the day of the Lord, after the testing of our faith by fire, when He comes with his angels taking vengeance on His enemies, to be glorified in His saints.

(3). **Parousia** (3952) – usually translated "coming," used in the following passages:
Matt. 24:3,27,30 – Christ's coming at the second advent following the "tribulation of those days"
1 Cor. 15:23 – Resurrection of those that are Christ's at His coming
1 Thes. 3:13 – Christ coming with all His saints
1 Thes. 4:15 – the Rapture occurs at Christ's coming
1 Thes 5:23 – Paul's prayer for believers to remain blameless until the Lord's coming
2 Thes 2:8 – Destruction of antichrist by the appearing (epiphaneia) of Christ's coming (parousia)
SO: At the *parousia* of Christ, all the above takes place: Christ comes with his saints, after the tribulation, to destroy antichrist, and to resurrect (rapture) all those "asleep" in Christ.

CONCLUSION: the way these Greek words are used interchangeably in relation to all these end-time events, with no distinction made between rapture and return, indicates that they all take place at about the same time in planned sequence and are not separated by the 7- year Tribulation Period.

9. The argument that the "Imminency" of the Rapture (that it is the next prophetic event to be fulfilled with no signs preceding it) requires the Rapture to Precede the Tribulation, is false.

This argument is based on circular reasoning (use of a false conclusion drawn from the Pre-trib position in attempt to support the Pre-trib theory). We are given several signs in Matthew 24 (and elsewhere) which Jesus himself clearly taught would precede His return. These signs include the Gospel being preached in all nations (Mt. 24:14-15; see Note above at 1.c.2 re. Scofield's heretical note at Rev. 14:6 re. Christ's gospel vs. Paul's), the coming of the great tribulation, the rise of the "apostasy" and of antichrist (2 Thes. 2:1-3, 1 Tim. 4:1), Peter's martyrdom

(John 21:18-19), etc.

The passage of time cannot change the meaning of scripture. If the Lord's return was not imminent (any moment) when scripture was written (it wasn't imminent for Peter!), it cannot be so now either. There are several signs that must be fulfilled before the Lord's return. No man can know the day or hour of the Lord's return, but we are "not in darkness" and are supposed to know when it is near (Matt. 24:33, 1 Thes. 5:4).

10. The Pre-trib argument that the nature of the Church (the Bride of Christ) forbids it going through the Tribulation is in error. This argument, based on the premise that the church is exempt from suffering the wrath of God, is in error because:

a. The "wrath" mentioned in the passages cited (Rom. 5:9, 1 Thes. 5:9) may refer to the wrath of eternal judgment in hell rather than suffering through the Tribulation (see Rom 1:18, 2:5-10, Heb. 3:11, etc.)

b. If believers are to be "raptured" to escape the wrath of the great Tribulation, then those who believe during the Tribulation must be immediately raptured as well upon conversion, which is clearly not the case.

c. Christians need not be removed from earth for God to protect them from His wrath (John 17:15). God's protection of the Israelites during the plagues on Egypt typifies protection of the faithful remnant of the Church during the Tribulation (similar plagues). Noah was not removed from earth during God's judgment but was protected through it. Lot was not raptured but was moved to a place of safety. The phrase "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world" in Rev. 3:10 can refer to divine protection rather than removal from the earth, and was a conditional promise given to only one of the seven churches of Asia, as compared to the promise of persecution and Tribulation given to the faithful church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11).

d. Jesus will return for a Bride that has made herself ready (Rev 19:7), and that has been purged, purified, and made white (Dan 11:35, 12:10). This purification will happen, as always throughout history, through the refining fire of suffering and persecution (Acts 14:22). We are to take up our cross and follow Jesus; the way of the cross has in most ages of the church been the way of persecution and suffering (John 15:18-24; Phillip. 1:29; 1 Thes. 3:4; 2 Tim. 2:12 & 3:12, etc). Suffering and persecution always strengthens the church; the absence thereof always weakens it.

11. The argument that the Post-trib Rapture is impossible, as it leaves no "non-raptured" people to populate the earth during the Millennium, is

false (a "red herring"). There are at least two possible answers to this argument:

a. The Bible does not teach that all unsaved are destroyed at Christ's return. In fact it clearly indicates otherwise:
Zechariah 14:16: *"And it shall come to pass, that* ***every one that is left*** *of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."* Many unsaved people will indeed be spared annihilation at the time of Christ's return, who will apparently be allowed to enter the kingdom in a non-glorified state.

b. The wicked unsaved who are destroyed at the Lord's coming will have children that have not yet reached the age of accountability. The earth could also be re-populated by orphans (Jer. 49:11).

The clear teaching throughout the New Testament of the one-time return of Christ at the end of the tribulation as He said is not undone by this type of collateral attack on its truth.

CONCLUSION

All scriptures dealing with the timing of the rapture show it to occur after the great tribulation, in particular Matt. 24:29-31, 1 Cor. 15:51-52, 2 Thes. 2:1-8 and Rev. 20:4-5. Not only is the pre-trib rapture position in direct conflict with these scriptures, but there is no verse or passage anywhere in the Bible that teaches that the Rapture must precede the Tribulation. The arguments given to support a Pre-trib rapture are indirect and very weak at best, and involve forced, spiritualized or secretive interpretations of all passages it obviously conflicts with to conform the text to the Pre-trib position, rather than relying on the plain-sense interpretation of the scriptures. The Post-Tribulation Rapture position has none of these conflicts, was the historic position of the Apostles and early church, and because it IS exegetically derived from scripture it easily harmonizes with all passages related to the second coming of Christ.

The great danger of the popular Pre-trib position is that it has produced a generation of Christians that are totally unprepared for days ahead, who believe they can ignore the warnings of Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation, and who see no reason to separate themselves from the rising "beast" system of Revelation 13, having been duped into believing those passages do not or will not apply to them. It is this writer's opinion that all the necessary mechanisms are now in

place for Satan to attempt to implement the enslavement of all humanity under the rule of the antichrist, from the globally connected electronic banking system and the microchip ID implant which may apparently be used as the “mark of the beast,” to the global government system being set up through the Vatican and UN. We believe Christians must draw near to the Lord and do all they can to prepare for very difficult days ahead, including preparing spiritually and mentally to suffer great persecution such as the most Christians have not seen in centuries. Christians should be on guard and prepared to resist the rising global antichrist economic system, and are called upon to “love not their lives unto the death” (Rev. 12:11). Finally, in addition to becoming aggressive confrontational soul-winners in this late hour, Christians should try to correct and inform their deceived brethren who have bought into in the hoax of the Pretrib Rapture. Amen.

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Updated January 2016

Original Link: https://independencebaptist.com/post-trib-rapture/